1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Chapter One

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

THE natural resources, methods of production, means of livelihood and property system of any community provide a tangible mechanism which regulates and gives stability to the relations between its members in accordance with the value system governing that culture.[1] In Silwa, the village community under study, agriculture is the basic activity of the great majority of the population.

According to the 1947 Census the distribution of occupations in Silwa is as follows:[2]

Occupation	*Male*	*Female*
Farmers	1288	1451
Industrial workers	47	84
Masons	47	0
Transport	36	0
Trade	69	1
Personal servants	10	387
Servants in Govt. offices and other social services	78	1
Unproductive and undefined jobs	272	86
Unemployed	292	317
TOTAL: 4457	2130	2327

Taking this table as a criterion for village occupations, it is clear that more than 60 per cent of the total population are engaged in agriculture. Yet the official census does not define its categories of occupation, and is

[1] Ernest Beaglehole, *Property, A Study in Social Psychology*, London, 1931.

[2] *Population Census, 1947* (Book I, Province of Aswan), Government Press, Cairo, 1951, p. 25.

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463 an unsatisfactory basis, and even misleading in some ways as it does not agree with the facts observed in the field study. When I faced my informant, Ali, with the census, he rejected it as unrepresentative of the occupations of the people of Silwa. He quickly asserted that they were all farmers and that all their women were housewives, and that 'there were no other jobs for them'. After some computing, he added that there were about 60 shop-keepers and pedlars, all males.[1] Men (but not women) industrial workers might be those who are working at the water-pumping station, and those engaged in the sugar-factory in Kom Ombo, a town to the south of Silwa. The number of 47 masons, Ali said, was excessive, for he could count only twenty. The 36 persons working in transport could be those who were employed in the railway stations and the making of roads. He went on to say that the categories of servants, unproductive workers, and unemployed might be those who are working in towns. He emphatically reiterated that he did not know how or from where the census authorities obtained the distribution of female occupations.

Yet whatever the census may mean by this distribution of occupations, the obvious fact is that much more than 60 per cent of the population are farmers. Some of the people who could even be classified as shop and stall keepers and industrial workers or any other occupation are normally either owners of a plot of land or partly engaged in agricultural activities.[2]

463 Moreover, in the village there are four families of strangers. The one living on the western edge of the village is mainly engaged in carpentry such as making of doors, chests, benches, beds, and water-wheels (which was their main work before the introduction of perennial irrigation), and some farm implements. The iron implements such as the sickle and the hoe are usually made by the itinerant blacksmith who visits the village once or twice a year. The carpenter's family is known to have originally come from the Province of Kena almost fifty years ago and have settled in Silwa ever since. They have no workshop but usually work in the homes of their customers.

[323] The main occupation of the second family, living at a distance of half a mile from the village on the northern edge, is pottery. Its members provide the village with most of the pots, pans, jars, water-pots and other utensils required for everyday life. The reason for their settlement on the northern side is to be nearer to the hills and the Nile from where they can procure clay, a whitish variety, needed for their job.

465 The carpenter and the potter, as well as the barber and the blacksmith, do not usually receive their fees on the spot, but go for their round during the harvest to collect their 'customs'. Every farmer is supposed to give them some of his crops, varying, of course, according to the services ren-

[939] [1] Very few women pedlars come from other provinces during harvest times to sell goods to women villagers and are called gipsies.

[2] For a general survey of agricultural problems in the Middle East, see B. A. Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East*, London, 1946.

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dered; but everyone must give them something, even 'ten or eleven cobs of millet'. The same procedure of payment applies to the village undertaker and the man who calls the prayer-times (muazzin) and the postman. In the case of the man who leads the prayers (imam), villagers send his 'custom' to his home, besides the small amount of money he receives from the 'Ministry of Religious Endowments'. In other words, the artisans as a group are maintained by the community they serve, and are not paid by a fixed price for their results. There is an observable change in this 'maintenance basis' especially in the case of the carpenter on his making of furniture and doors.

The members of the third family of strangers are Christians (Coptic Church) who mainly derive their livelihood from the income of their corn mill and who live on the other side of the railway track. They had monopolized milling for twenty years. Then four persons from the village in competition started another corn-mill. Both these undertakings later co-operated and raised the charges, and it was this that gave an impetus to the whole village last year to establish a communal corn-mill.

The fourth family which has a specialized job is that of the water-carriers who are also alien to the village. They live on its western border nearer to the Nile from which they draw water to distribute in water-skins to the homes of government officials, shopkeepers, childless couples and others, when extra water is required. They are paid either in bread, corn, or money, according to what they bring, and not on a 'maintenance basis' as their comparatively late arrival in the village has been welcomed by government officials, policemen, or childless people.

Sixty years ago the first shop was opened in the village by a family called al Hudoor from Esna, in the Province of Kena [1] Ten years later the first man from the village itself opened the second shop. At present, there are about thirty shops of varying size which have mostly started up during the last ten years. Payment for goods sold has been, more often than not, at the end of the harvest period. The shopkeepers keep an account of what customers buy, to be presented to them at this time. The same applies at present to most of the village government officials or wage-earners, who pay their bills for purchased goods at the end of the month.

The market-day, held every Saturday (i.e. at the beginning of the week), is the main day for buying and selling. On this day economic as well as social exchange takes place, and it is said, 'Even to get the market's dust is better than not going to it'. Until three years ago the majority of the traders came from Edfu, the nearest town to Silwa. Retail traders, shoemakers, butchers, silversmiths, and coffee-makers come in to sell the villagers their goods, while commercial dealers buy crops, sheep, chickens and eggs. Since then, the number of traders from Edfu has diminished considerably, as a result of the increase in the number of village traders.

[1] Plural of 'al Hadari' meaning coming from the town, which was the name given to them by the villagers at that time and which they still retain.

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An oil-press was also started twenty years ago by a stranger from Kous, and he is still referred to as Koussy. At the beginning of every summer, the shop used to press oil from the locally grown sesame (simsim). Five years later the Omda (headman of the village) started another oil-press in competition, and this for some time gave rise to gossip concerning the Omda's prestige in competing with the stranger. But during the last war, as a result of rationing the oil, the flourishing undertakings closed, being unable to come up to the hygienic requirements of the regulations and the government controls.

Besides these specialized occupations there are two other occupations undertaken by families from the village, namely weaving and hair-cutting. The two families of weavers, with their old-fashioned looms, supply all the village women with their woollen cover (worn on going outside and also used as a blanket at night). They also weave the outer garments of the older generation of men (zabut), which they wear in winter, while the younger generation is gradually abandoning the homespun and woven wool for the factory-made cloth.[1]

For the last three generations these families of weavers and barbers have been carrying on with their occupations, as they possess no land. The same applies to two families of fishermen; one of these relies entirely on fishing, while the other follows it as a supplementary occupation to farming.

Midwifery, and undertaking, are also specialized pursuits which have been carried on in the same families for a long time. The same is true of the offices of the priest and of the Sheikh of the village school (Kuttab).

From such a survey it can be seen that the specialized occupations such as carpentry, milling, pottery, and shopkeeping have been introduced by outsiders, who, though performing an important function in the village economic life, have not been entirely accepted by the villagers as fully-fledged members of the community. Immediately one of the villagers themselves engages in any of these occupations, however, this particular occupation is brought into a more conscious level of evaluation. As long as strangers alone pursue a particular task or occupation, the villagers are indifferent to, or deprecate, the value-prestige of that job. Yet if another villager can show that the job is as paying and rewarding as farming, then other villagers may entertain the idea of competing with him. The reluctance to embark on anything but farming is partly due to the fact that the specialized jobs mentioned have been started by outsiders. Moreover, there is no scope for much specialization of occupations, as an appreciable amount of this is done by the various members of the household. Barter, milling, basket- and mat-making, and even a crude type of building is being carried on by every household. It is the landless people who can only gain their living by working as craftsmen or traders. It is true that, as the technical skill required for specialized occupations is transmitted through the kinship lines, it is not surprising to find that most of these jobs

[1] Women do the spinning for the cloth from the sheep's fleece.

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are almost hereditary, learnt by son from father or uncle. Parents who have land afford their children no other opportunity but of working on it, and they endeavour to keep them on the farm.

Ali maintained that 'agriculture is the best occupation and the most dignified of all, an occupation which is worth while following. Apart from aliens, there is no man who is not a farmer, and no woman who is not a housekeeper and a cook. A man cooking or sewing or a woman ploughing or irrigating the land is something unheard of in our village. Indeed, one of the reasons for marriage is the fact that some of the tasks are performed only by a woman, and there must be a woman to do them as there always has been. Very few of our women have travelled by train, and if so, chiefly to visit relatives in town or shrines of saints, while a much greater number of men go to town on private or official visits.' This statement shows clearly the rigid sex-distribution in occupation. Furthermore, farming, especially one's own land, is the most esteemed occupation for men, and it is only necessity that forces others to be engaged in any other occupation.[1] This attitude of mind renders the possibility of establishing an industry or craft in the village very difficult. The prestige attached to the possession of land is very great. A wealthy merchant is not socially on par with a farm-owner. Farm-earnings are the most meritorious of all earnings; in other words, they are the surest of all 'halal' earnings---legitimately deserved and thus divinely approved. In farming, one is grappling directly with nature and getting the produce out of the soil's depths, depending on or contacting no other human beings, whom one might oppress or be oppressed by. One has only to sow the seeds and attend to them and God will look after the rest. The same attitude of 'halal' earnings applies to fishing, breeding cows or raising sheep, where the results solely depend on one's treatment and dealing with the object to be attended to. Thus, according to Ali, 'the evils of man are avoided'. This is certainly a fabricated religious justification or rationalization of the most secure source of livelihood in this rural society. The statement of my informant shows, however, the psychological anxiety that is bound up with economic insecurity, especially in ventures that entail any dealing with people or involving human contacts.

It is also significant that to acquire land through inheritance as distinguished from buying it, is to be stamped with the hallmark of prestige and prosperity. To be called 'heir to land' means good origin and good status in the village.

The reasons for the social importance of land and the emotional attachment to it are not difficult to seek. Economically speaking, land for generations has been the tangible bulwark against starvation and insecurity; it never fails to give reward for its cultivation, and thus it is a permanent property 'better than gold'. This analogy is derived from a well-known folk-tale about a father who had two sons, bequeathing to the favourite

[1] There appears to be no supporting evidence for this esteem either in folklore or in proverbs. There is nothing in the text of the Koran to that effect.

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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

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APPENDIX III

In connection with the villager's consumption of food, a few remarks on meat are relevant. Meat is a rare delicacy in his diet, offered usually on festival occasions and always served with wheat bread. One can assess the amount of animal protein consumed by the quantity of meat sold on the market day, the only day, apart from festival occasions, on which the villager can eat meat. People in the village spend comparatively more on their food on market day. In the market there have been for a long time five butchers, each slaughtering on the average three sheep weighing thirty Egyptian pounds, making a total of 450 pounds. If this amount were distributed among a population of 4,450, the weekly *per capita* consumption of meat from the market would be less than one-tenth of a pound, i.e. less than five and a half pounds per year. We may add to this poultry meat, which does not exceed a number of thirty chickens for a family of five throughout the whole year. This works out at six chickens per person a year, each chicken weighing about a pound and a half. Then the total annual consumption of meat per person would be fourteen and a half pounds. This is certainly the maximum *per capita* consumption of meat, as all the chickens in the house are not eaten by its members, for some are sold to buy manufactured goods.[1]

According to the statistics of the Cairo Medical School—Kasr el-Aini—the fellah's diet mainly lacks proteins and fats, the deficiency in the former amounting to 20 per cent, and in the latter to 16 per cent.

[1] Comparable data with regard to standard of living and other points related to livelihood in Silwa could be found in the series of Chinese studies on peasant life in China. Working out such comparisons here will take us outside the frame of reference in this work. Cf. Hsiao-Tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China*, London, 1939; Martin Yang, *A Chinese Village*, London, 1948; Hsiao-Tung Fei and Chih I. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949.

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with open fronts which can be closed with wooden shutters when the owners are away (Fig. 11). Through the open shop-fronts the tailors are to be seen making *ǧalālīb* (long blouses; singular, *gallabīyeh*) for their customers, and in some villages one may watch the coppersmiths manufacturing bowls and jars. The vessels are hammered into shape over iron bars fixed in the ground. The iron bar is bent over at a right angle at the top, and flattened out so as to form a kind of anvil, on which the bowl or other vessel is beaten into shape.

FIG. 11. A VILLAGE STREET WITH SHOPS AND BUTCHERS' BOOTHS

Benches of bricks and mud (*maṣāṭib*, singular *maṣṭabeh*) are found outside some of the houses, and on them is usually to be seen a collection of children, fowls, goats, and even sheep, in happy promiscuity. Or perhaps a *maṣṭabeh* may be occupied solely by an old man, spinning wool, or holding a rosary in his hand and slowly passing the beads between his fingers and thumb (Fig. 12).

During harvest-time the swishing of the sticks as men and women beat the grain from the bundles of corn which they have received as wages for work in the fields,[1] resounds along the village streets.

The Yūsuf Canal (Figs. 4 and 13) flows past a village in which I have frequently resided, and there is a good deal of folklore connected with it. The water is believed to possess curative properties

[1] See Chapter X.

PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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304 463 531 under which he squats, so that his clients can choose whatever pattern or patterns they prefer. Some are very elaborate, and must involve considerable suffering on the part of the person who is tattooed with them. Many of the patterns are conventional designs, and I am assured that they have no special meaning, but are chosen according to individual taste and fancy. One pattern is called *esh-shagareh* (the tree), and is the one usually chosen by both men and women to decorate the back of the right hand. So far as I have observed, this pattern when used by women differs slightly from that used by men. The drawing given here (Fig. 21) I made from the hand of a woman; the marks were tattooed on her hand when she was a young girl.

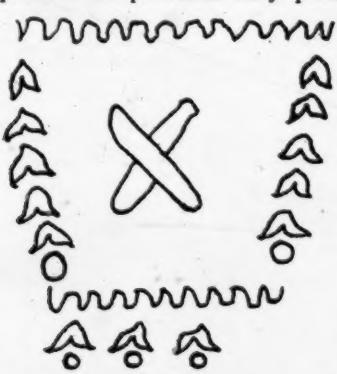

FIG. 21. TATTOO MARKS ON THE BACK OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT HAND AND ACROSS THE BACK OF THE WRIST

FIG. 22. TATTOO MARK FROM EDGE OF LOWER LIP TO BASE OF CHIN

304 531 The women are usually tattooed from the edge of the lower lip down to the base of the chin. The pattern shown in Fig. 22, copied by me from the same woman, is also called *esh-shagareh*. The tattoo on the back of the hand and wrist, as well as on the fingers and thumb, is said to make them strong.

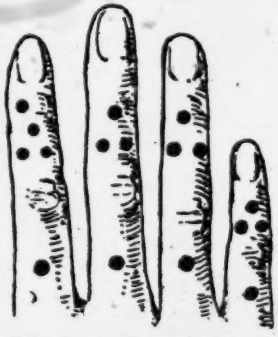

FIG. 23. TATTOO MARKS ON WOMAN'S FINGERS TO MAKE THEM STRONG

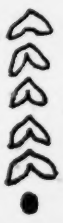

FIG. 24. TATTOO MARKS ON THUMB BELOW THE SECOND JOINT TO MAKE THE THUMB STRONG

304 A boy is often tattooed with a single dot on his chin and another near his right nostril; also most boys have three dots, thus ⁘, tattooed on one arm, just above the wrist. Boys are tattooed in

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this manner when they are still very young (Fig. 25), for tattooing is considered to be of benefit to them. According to one of my informants, the dot tattooed at the side of the nostril is sometimes done as a cure for toothache. It is a very common mark among a large number of the Arabs; one of them told me that it was done as a sign of their race.

Many of the men among the *fellāḥīn* have a tattoo mark on either temple, the mark being often in the shape of a bird. This is sometimes purely a form of decoration, but it is also done as a cure for headache. One man I know has three short, straight lines tattooed near one side of his forehead. He told me that this was done when he was a boy, as the eye on the same side as the tattoo marks was very weak. He declared that it effected an almost immediate and quite permanent cure.

FIG. 25. WOMAN TATTOOING A YOUNG BOY

Another man I know had three dots tattooed about an inch and a half above each nipple, and three more in the centre of his chest. He also had three more dots tattooed on each shoulder-blade and one behind one ear. He gave me the following account of the history of these marks. One cold day he was warming himself over a fire on which was being cooked some fish which smelled unpleasantly. A woman glanced at his chest, which was bare, but he drew his clothes over it so that she should not see it. From that moment he began to itch, and the people said that he was affected by the fumes (*buhāḳ*)—those, I presume, from the fish. As a remedy for this he was tattooed with the dots as described above, which immediately cured him.

If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another

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F 304 789 If a woman has lost several children in succession, when another one arrives she has it tattooed with a small dot in the centre of its forehead and another on the outer side of the left ankle. She F believes that after this the child will live, because her *ḳarīneh*, [304] seeing these marks, will not attempt to take her child.[1] The belief is that when King David had the interview with the queen of the *aḳrān* described in the following chapter she promised that any child that had these tattoo marks on the forehead and ankle should not be injured by its mother's *ḳarīneh*.

F 304 755 753 776 One man, who was a village guard far south in Upper Egypt, had a fish tattooed on the inner side of one arm, near the wrist. He told me that it was done some years before, when he was possessed by an *ʿafrīt*, that it quite cured him, and that he had never been troubled in that way since. This fish mark does not always serve a curative purpose, for in a village much farther north I saw F a boy with a similar design tattooed on the back of one of his [531] hands, and he assured me that it was done only as an ornament.

F C 304 787 Most of the Copts have a cross tattooed on the inner sides of the wrists There is a belief among some, if not all, of those Copts belonging to the *fellāḥīn* class that the Abyssinians will one day conquer Egypt, and will kill all the Copts as well as the Muslims if they (the Copts) cannot show this sign on their wrists. The Copts will, it is said, hold up their hands, thus exposing to view F C the sign of their religion.

304 531 788 One Coptic friend of mine, a man of good position, showed me some tattoo marks on his arm. There was an elaborate pattern on the inner side of his arm, below which were tattooed the dates of the two occasions on which he had gone on pilgrimages to Jerusalem—1911 and 1914. Another Copt told me that his little sister also had the year of her visit to Jerusalem tattooed on one arm, and that in future the year of each succeeding pilgrimage that she made to the sacred city would be similarly recorded. His mother, who had performed the pilgrimage on several occasions, had had each year of this event tattooed on one of her arms. Tattooing can thus be a means of record-keeping.

F 304 463 The operation of tattooing is an exceedingly painful one, and has very often unpleasant results, though the discomfort may be only temporary. One of my servants, a young man of about twenty-two years of age, was very anxious to have the back of his right hand tattooed this year. A specialist in the art was usually

[1] See pp. 69 ff. for explanation of *ḳarīneh*.

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present at the weekly market, seating himself, with all his paraphernalia, on the outskirts of the market-place and under the shadow of a tree. A number of patterns were placed before the young man; he at once selected that called *esh-shagareh*, and the tattooer set to work. While working he had no occasion to refer to his pattern; long and constant practice had made him an adept. He would lightly prick out a small portion of the design, then work over it two or three times more, and so proceed until the task was completed. The first finger was not touched, and, when I remarked on this, my servant told me that that finger was never tattooed on a man's hand, but that it was done on a woman's. It took some time before the work was finished, the pain, which was great, being heroically borne by the unfortunate young man. However, I suppose that the thought of how beautiful he would look afterward helped him to endure! I rather fancy that the tattooing of the hand is a sign of manhood; it is certainly a painful initiatory rite. Soon after I returned to my house I found that the young man's hand, and indeed the whole of the right arm, had begun to swell, and that he was decidedly feverish. I made him lie down, and as the morning went on the fever and inflammation increased, and he was unfit to move. I wanted to send for a doctor, but he assured me he would soon be all right, and that most people got like this after having their hand tattooed. Toward the late afternoon he was much better, and by the next morning he had practically recovered.

Among the negroid peoples in Egypt, especially among the Berberines, cicatrization lines are often seen along the cheeks. These are probably tribal marks. Occasionally similar marks are to be seen near the ear or on the side of the forehead, and these have usually been made as a cure for bad eyes, headache, or other ills. Some Egyptians have the marks of two or three short cuts on the side of the face close to the ear. When I inquired as to the meaning of these cuts I was told that they were made because it was the custom. This practice is, I think, tending to die out.

It is quite a common sight to see notches cut along the outer edge of the ear—sometimes in one ear only, sometimes in both. The number of notches also varies, and in some cases only one has been cut. I have never noticed these notches in women's ears. I have observed that this kind of intentional deformation of the ear is common among many of the Arab tribes settled in Egypt,

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843 accepted belief that the child will die directly it is born. Accordingly, a pregnant woman on seeing a dead person immediately breaks her necklace, so that the beads fall into her lap, and then dashes water on her face. This is believed to ensure the child living after it is born.

I have been told in many parts of Egypt that whatever an expectant mother 'yearns for' will appear on some part of the child's body at birth if the mother cannot obtain what she desires at the time of her craving. For example, I heard of a pregnant woman who had a great longing for grapes to eat, but could not obtain any, as the fruit was not at that time in season. Consequently the mark of a cluster of grapes appeared on the child's neck when it was born. My informant told me that he had seen this child himself, and that the bunch of grapes could be easily recognized. He also informed me that the mark of a single grape was commoner than that of a bunch, but that in either case the mark would swell out during the grape season and shrivel up again when the grapes were over! I have since ascertained that this periodical swelling and shrinking does not always occur, though my first informant, a very reliable man, assured me that he himself had observed this strange phenomenon. Again, if a woman craves for a special piece of meat and cannot obtain it the form of it will appear somewhere on the child's body. I myself have seen a child, whose mother craved for a pomegranate, marked with a shape of the fruit on one of its legs. I took a photograph of the child, but the mark, which was red in colour, unfortunately does not show up.

843 262 The women often have a craving to eat mud during their pregnancy. They go to the bed of a canal and break up into small pieces some of the clods of mud which have partially dried up since the inundation. They keep a store of these in their pockets or tied up in their veils, so that they may have them handy when the craving comes upon them. These pieces of mud are called *ṭīn iblīz* (alluvial mud). This curious craving by an expectant mother is common in some other parts of the world, as well as in Egypt.

849 ●463 A woman at her confinement may be attended only by her mother or some other female relative, or she may call in the help of a midwife. There are special training-centres for midwives at the present time in Egypt, all regularly inspected by a most competent Englishwoman.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

attached a string of seven grains of beans and a little cotton bag containing a small quantity of the seven ingredients of one of the baskets (Fig. 37).

The midwife's fee consists of a large basket (Fig. 38) of maize, bread, dates, various nuts, and occasionally a little money.[1]

Some of the six various grains, together with the salt, are often given to the father to scatter over his fields. This is a fertility charm, and is believed to ensure his having good crops.

FIG. 38. MIDWIFE CARRYING HER WAGES ON HER HEAD

In addition to the charms mentioned above, the child sometimes has another one made of thick iron wire twisted into a particular shape (Fig. 37). This is also hung round the child's neck, but only so if, when it cries, it clenches its hands and shakes itself.

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following mixture is put into a child's eyes by the midwife on the seventh day. The woman brings an onion with her and squeezes the juice from it into a small coffee-cup, mixing with it salt, oil, and, usually, *kohl* also. Then, taking a feather, she dips it into the mixture and, opening the child's eyes, brushes the feather right across them. It is believed that this will give the child wide open and beautiful eyes.

The naming of the child is part of the seventh-day ceremony. If the parents are anxious to discover the best and luckiest name for their offspring they proceed as follows. Candles, usually four

[1] Sometimes she is, I believe, paid only in grain.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I have been told that if a woman remains for a long time after marriage without the prospect of a child she will pray for a son, promising that, in the event of her prayer being answered, she will have the boy's hair shaved, leaving only the tufts, which she will dedicate to the sheikh or sheikhs, or to the saint or saints, with whom she has interceded. When offering such prayers she will probably repair to the tomb of the sheikh, or to the church of the Coptic saint, to whom she wishes to appeal. I was told in Fayūm Province that if a boy is seen with his hair cut into tufts it means that he is an only son, and that this style of headdress will ensure him a long life. The initial cutting of the hair, it should be pointed out, is performed at home.

Among the Copts the rite of circumcision should be observed before baptism, according to Dr Butler.[1] The actual ceremony closely resembles the Muslim rite, so that the following description applies to the followers of both religions, the only difference being that whereas the Coptic child should have this operation before baptism, for the Muslim there is no limitation as to age, though it is always carried out during the early years of a child's life. The ceremony entails a certain expense, and is therefore sometimes carried out conjointly with a marriage ceremony, so that the cost may be shared.

The boy who is to undergo this operation has his hands and feet dyed with *ḥenna* at sunset two days before it takes place. On the following day the barber comes and cuts the boy's hair in a particular way, called *mukarraṣ*, which means 'made into little loaves or cakes.' I do not think that this form of hairdressing is in any way connected with the tufts of hair described above. After the haircutting the boy is washed, and, so I was told, coins are put on his face. This is probably the same custom as is observed at weddings, when the female visitors who wish to present the bride with small sums of money go up to her and place the coin they wish to give to her on her upturned face. In the case of the boy the money presented in this way is taken by the barber. The boy then has a particular kind of felt cap placed on his head. This cap, which is white in colour, decorated with yellow designs and tassels (Fig. 40), is purchased by the parents especially for the occasion, and worn only for this rite. The cap is further decorated by the attachment of scraps of coloured paper or bits of cloth or muslin. The boy, thus attired, is then placed on a horse, usually, I believe, with his face toward the animal's tail; he is covered up with a shawl, and, with one man holding him securely and another leading

[1] See my article in *Man*, vol. xxv, p. 263.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

ululations of grief. Among them are professional wailers, whose lamentations are the loudest of all.

It should be noted here that the wailing and general uproar made by women at a death is quite contrary to the teaching of the founder of Islām, and many men among the peasants in Egypt have often expressed to me their disapproval of the practice. As will be seen later, this custom is one of the many survivals from ancient times

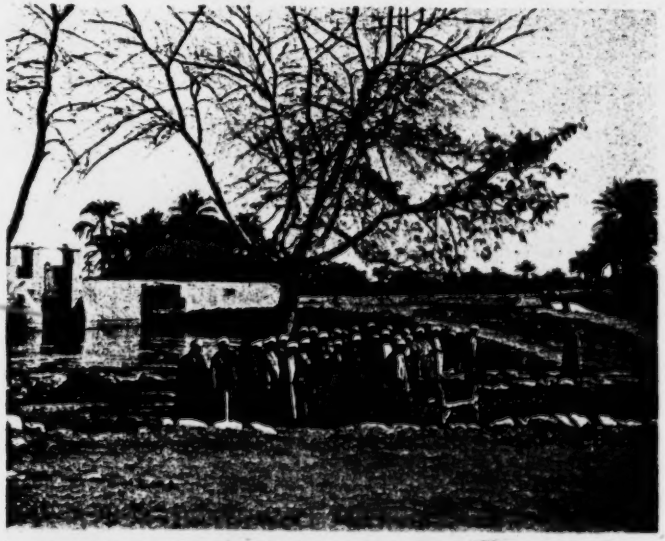

FIG. 52. THE HALT FOR PRAYER ON THE WAY TO THE CEMETERY

It is surprising for how long a time the women can keep up their wailing, which is pitched in a very high key. As a matter of fact, their throats are often so affected by the continuous uttering of these piercing cries that at the end of one day of mourning they can speak only in a whisper.

On its way to the grave the funeral procession halts at a specially chosen spot, and the bier is placed on the ground (Fig. 52). The men stand in rows, one behind the other, and assume a deeply reverential attitude, while a *fiḳīh* (plur. *fuḳahā*; see p. 172) recites passages from the Ḳorān, the assembled men often joining in. When these recitations are finished the bearers come forward and raise

INDUSTRIES AND MARKETS

hours and then left to go out. The vessels are removed from the oven when they are cold.

The water-jars (*ḥalālīṣ*) manufactured at this place are entirely hand-made, and for this process a circular hollow in the ground, such as has been described previously, is used. Large, shallow saucers and bowls are made in the same way.

A large lump of clay, sufficient to form the whole *ḥallāṣ*, is placed in the hollow, and beaten into a preliminary shape with the cottage-loaf-shaped clay implement. The curved piece of wood is also used here to beat up the sides of the vessel. When bowl and saucers are being made the rims are beaten into shape with it likewise. A *garūt* is used to cut off any superfluous clay that may appear during the formation of the *ḥallāṣ*. These jars are then left to sun-bake for a short time before the rim is added with the aid of the wheel. The *ḥalālīṣ* are baked for the same length of time as the *ziyār*.

I asked a potter who worked with the wheel how long it took to become proficient in the art, and he told me that he had learned it from his father, and had taken five years to become really skilled in his work. He, however, said that if he had learned it from some one else it would have taken him ten years to become an expert. His father, he remarked, was a good teacher as well as a very skilful workman.

The granaries, which are usually erected on the roofs of the houses, are made by the women out of clay and chopped straw, well mixed together. Each granary takes some time to complete, as it can only be made piecemeal. The finished portion must remain exposed to the sun until it is fairly dry before another can be added. When the whole is constructed it is left in the sun to harden thoroughly.

The granary has a circular opening at the top, covered by a clay lid, while near the base there is a small opening which is closed with a mud stopper. This latter opening is used when the supply of grain in the granary is low, the grain being more easily extracted through it than through the opening at the top, for many such granaries are from four to five feet high.

These granaries are usually roughly circular, with straight sides, the top slightly domed; but in some parts of Egypt many of them are globular, a shape possibly derived from certain basket granaries described below. Farther south, near el-Kāb, I saw some much

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Siwans MR14

F 285

therefore pliable enough to be bent into whatever shape the basket-maker desires.

F 085 463 441

In one very small village in Fayūm I found a large number of people engaged in this industry. There is also a basket-merchant in this village, and his trade extends all over the country. He informed me that he sent large consignments of baskets abroad, even, he declared, to England, but I am not in a position to be able to verify his statement. I bought a certain number of baskets

FIG. 88. BASKET-MAKERS IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN FAYŪM

S [285]

from him, including one which, he said, had come from the oasis of Sīweh. This basket, the workmanship of which is very superior, is to be seen in the adjacent illustration on the right (Fig. 89).

F 285 415

Baskets of the variety called *ḳafaṣ* (plural *aḳfāṣ*) (Fig. 90) are used as temporary cages for fowls, pigeons, rabbits, and so on. Oranges and other fruits may also be packed in these baskets, as well as household utensils. In the manufacture of these baskets,

F [960]

which are made of the mid-ribs of palm-branches only, men are more usually employed than women. The baskets can be made very strong, and therefore may be used for carrying heavy weights. Vertical lengths of mid-rib are inserted into holes pierced through horizontal bars of the same material forming the four sides; no.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

goods for sale pays a small sum to the owner of the property on which the market is held.

There is no more animated scene than a village market (Fig. 95). Some of the traders bring their goods the evening before, packed in *akfāṣ* (plural of *ḳafaṣ*) and other receptacles, and these, together with bundles of sugar-cane and the like, are deposited overnight in the market-place, being left in the charge of village guards. Others who have goods for sale begin to assemble very early in the morning, bringing sacks of onions, bundles of cotton cloths, cheap jewellery, household and kitchen utensils, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels. The butchers are usually among the first to arrive, for they slaughter the animals on the spot, hanging up the carcasses on huge wooden tripods (Fig. 95, and p. 32, Fig. 11). While thus suspended the meat is cut up, and the purchaser is able to select any special portion that he or she requires.

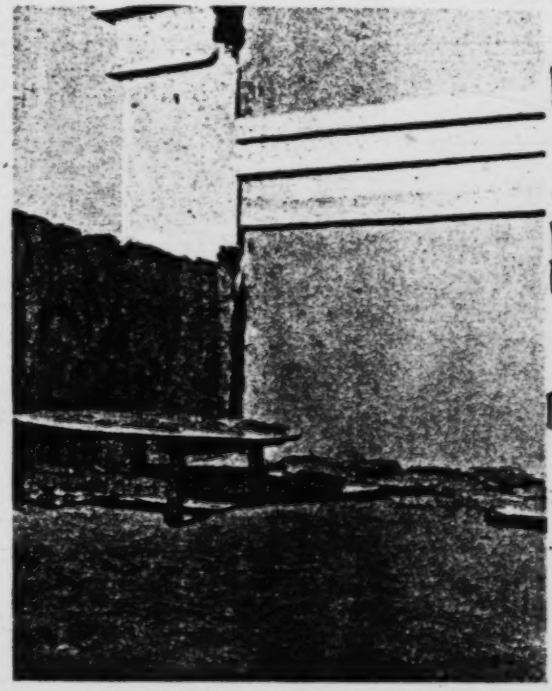

FIG. 94. LOAVES OF UNBAKED BREAD PUT IN THE SUN TO RISE

Each trade has its own particular location in the market-place, which is thus divided up into sections, such as the market of camels, the market of meat, the market of sugar-cane, and so on. Women take their full share in the business of selling, and may be

[Text continues on p. 167]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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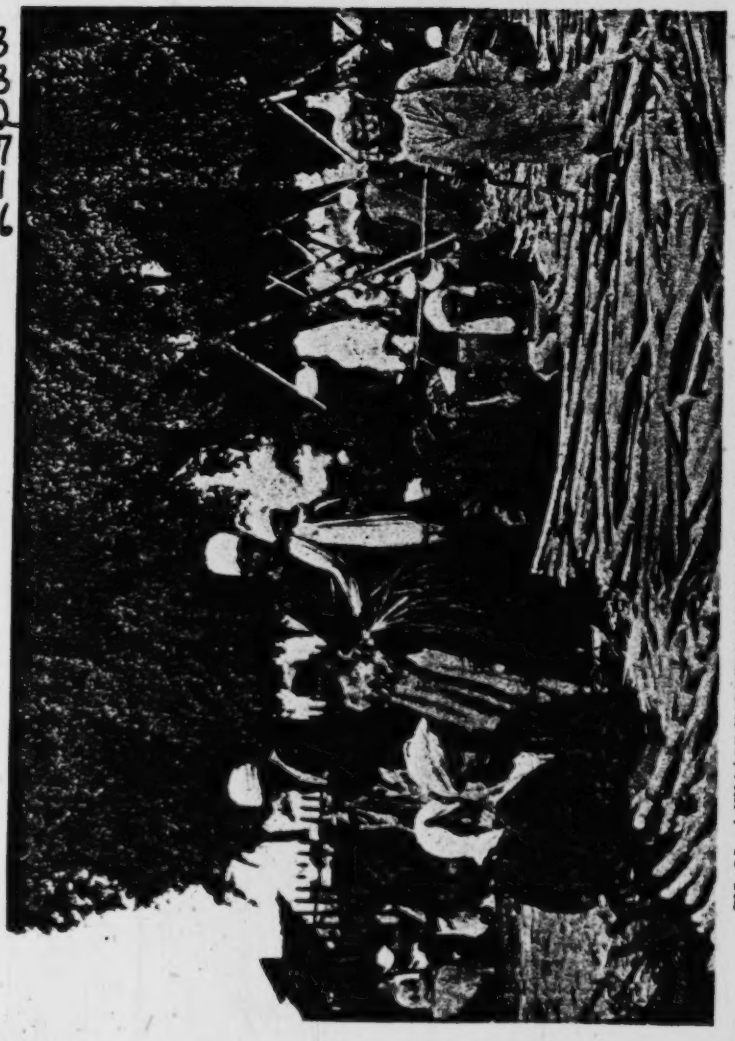

FIG. 93. A VILLAGE MARKET: SUGAR-CANE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE BUTCHERS BEHIND

[page 166]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

'bride of the corn' (*'arūset el-ḳamḥ*), is used as a charm. One may be suspended over the house-door as an antidote to the evil eye; another may be hung up in the room containing the stores of food, as a charm to ensure abundance. Many tradesmen hang such objects in their shop-windows, believing that this will bring them plenty of customers. Again, in some parts of Egypt the 'bride of the corn' is temporarily placed on the heaps of grain after the winnowing is completed, as a charm to secure a good harvest the following year. Sometimes the grain from these heads of corn is extracted and mixed with the next year's sowing. The 'bride' may be left hanging till it is replaced at the next harvest, or, again, it may be allowed to remain in its place until it falls to pieces (Fig. 99).

FIG. 98. THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW

Before the field is cut a certain number of people are given presents of corn by the owner. These gifts of the firstfruits are bestowed on some of the poorest people in the village, as well as on the barber, the *mueddin* (the man who chants the call to prayer from the mosque), the *zummāreh*-player, the carpenter, and the *fuḳahā*—the last-mentioned being poor men who recite the Ḳorān in mosques, in private houses, at funeral ceremonies, and at the periodical visits to the grave (see pp. 112, 114 f., 117 ff., and Fig. 100).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 [217] THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 124 114 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and from them I have collected and written down a large number of tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 115 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

or village.[1] Doubtless, too, the ancient craftsmen were to be seen at work in the open shops as are their descendants to-day; and here it is to be noted that a support, somewhat resembling that upon which the modern coppersmith rests his vessel in order to hammer it into shape (p. 32), is depicted in numerous New Kingdom paintings of metal-workers plying their tasks [2] (Fig. 155).

I have spoken (p. 23) of the light-heartedness of the modern Egyptians. This, as my brother has pointed out to me, was an

FIG. 155. ANCIENT METAL-WORKERS
After Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes*, Pl. XI.

outstanding trait in the character of the ancient Egyptians, as is well exemplified not only in their literature,[3] but in the paintings and sculptures which adorn the tomb-chapels of the wealthy, and which depict feasting, sport,[4] pastimes, and daily life in general. The Egyptians devoted all this labour and expenditure to the construction and decoration of their Houses of Eternity not because they were always morbidly brooding over death, but because they hated death and loved life and all that life stands for.[5]

I have pointed out on pp. 38 f. that it is to her brother that a

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *E.g.* W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pls. 36, 59*a*, 228, 241, 242, 317.
[3] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, translated by A. M. Blackman (London, 1927), especially pp. 36 ff., 133, 242 ff., 251 ff.; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, translated by A. M. Blackman (Oxford, 1927), p. 29.
[4] *Cf.* A. H. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. ix, pp. 9, 12 and note 4, 15 and note 9; A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 122, 125.
[5] On this subject see especially A. H. Gardiner, "Life and Death (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii, pp. 19 ff.

243 Northern Delta. It occupies about 6% of the cultivated area, but its acreage depends on the height of the Nile flood, and is controlled by the Government. Thus in 1935 there were 470,375 feddans under rice, in 1937 only 240,469, and in 1939 476,454. The rice is of good quality and can be exported.

241 [262 252] Beans (*fûl*) provide fodder for draught animals, from June to December; those of the best quality, prepared with oil or fat, make a rich and popular dish.

Onions and sugar-cane are grown in Upper Egypt.

Then there are barley, lentils and dates, not to mention vegetables and fruits, the cultivation of which, although confined to certain localities, increases year by year.

The fellah keeps a narrow strip or corner of his field for his own use. Here, without using any manure, he plants the vegetables appropriate to each season: *bamia* in winter, *fûl* in spring and *molokhiya* in summer. These will be mentioned again in the chapter on the fellah's food. Apart from occupying much less space than other crops, they are cultivated in much the same way as the rest.

241 463 181 Egypt is becoming a land of variety in crops, but this diversity has not involved any sort of specialisation for the fellah. He is still a manual labourer, a "Jack of all trades", and his work remains simple and monotonous. There is not enough differentiation to form specialists of any kind, nor enough uniformity to limit his work to one dull task. This means that the fellah can adapt himself to any new crop. He will never introduce a novelty himself, but will take to it if encouraged by authority, the more readily if experience proves it to pay. This has been noticeable in the case of flax.

177 242 407 Mechanical innovations, however, are a very different matter. The preceding pages will have made it clear that there is never any question of tractors, reapers or binders, let alone winnowing or threshing machines, or even cars and waggons. Such machines as these are scarcely more common today than in the past. The fellah is too poor to use them, and in any case he feels no need for any instrument which would divide him from the soil. It is true that the large estates under direct cultivation employ extremely modern machinery, which is handled by fellaheen, but this is an

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is about 5 ft. 6 ins.

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (24)

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta.

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets his beard grow.

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered into a kerchief.

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum.

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted.

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

MR13 Fellahin MR13

Copts MR10

F 304 Sometimes, though less commonly nowadays, young girls have the clitoris excised. In some regions boys have their right ears pierced.

The fellaheen do not gash their cheeks like the Nubians (Berberines), but they colour themselves, especially by tattooing, which is perhaps the main distinguishing mark of the fellaheen, and is applied to men and women alike in adolescence.

In the middle of the forehead or the chin, on the temples or the backs of the hands, appear dots or geometrical patterns; F [532] and on the chest, back or forearm there may be rough designs, such as a sword or tree, a name or a date, and for the Copts C [532 304] a cross more or less floriated. This tattooing is rarely found lower than the waist, and is never obscene.

F 304 463 The work is done by a specialist, usually a Bedouin of the same sex as the patient. The operation takes place in the open, at a street corner on market-day. The method is very primitive and causes painful swellings. The tattooer traces the lines of the pattern selected at a chosen spot on the skin with a *style* made of five to seven needles bound together, or with a sort of pricking stamp. Then he colours the bleeding pattern with lamp-black mixed in oil or spirit. An indelible greenish tint is thus obtained.

F 302 The use of henna (*lawsonia inermis*) to dye the hair, hands, feet or perhaps only the nails, is a characteristically Egyptian affectation. It goes back to the Twentieth Dynasty, and Islam has encouraged it (37). The application of henna is a delicate affair. A poultice, made with the powdered leaves, has to be applied hot and kept on from three to twenty-four hours according to quality. This produces a reddish-orange or brown colouring, which lasts about a fortnight.

F 302 587 515 Widows dye their hair with henna, to appear younger and attract a second husband. Young women use it to clean their heads and kill lice, to stop hair from coming out, and to make themselves pretty. The shaven heads of children are reddened with henna as a hygienic precaution. The hands, feet and fingernails of the women are only so coloured once or twice a year, at the great festivals.

F 302 *Kohl* (38) is used to blacken the eyelids and eyebrows, and make the eyes look larger; its function is both decorative

291 nearly down to the ears. Such a *libda* costs three and a half piastres.

The *gallabiya* is the principal garment. It is a tunic of an indigo blue or whitish colour, made of cotton. It is like a long sleeveless shirt, with no waist, closed up to the breast and reaching to the ankles. (The loin cloth of the Ancient Egyptians disappeared shortly before the time of the Ptolemies.) The sleeves are long, and the cut fairly full. A short opening at the chest reveals the black buttons and stripes of a waistcoat. An adult's *gallabiya* needs five [463 465] metres of material (about six yards) at a price of P.T. 3-6 a metre. The tailor gets three piastres for making one up (**).

When at work the fellah tucks up his *gallabiya* above his 291 knees or girds it in at the waist like a blouse, or he may take 461 it off, roll it up and put it aside to serve later as a pillow for his siesta. He then appears dressed in white with a voluminous pair of drawers held up over his hips by a cord and reaching to his knees. His shirt is covered by a waistcoat, but lower down flaps open over the drawers. When it is too hot, he takes off both waistcoat and shirt, and goes about barebacked.

291 His feet, too, are always bare. However, he usually has a rough pair of slippers, made of yellowish leather, which cover his feet to the ankles but are open at the heels. He puts them on for feasts, or after his ablutions. These slippers are locally made, and are called *balgha*.

The boys are naked under their *gallabiya*, which is shorter and lighter in colour than the men's.

Small girls wear a more complicated dress, with waist and bodice. They are often dressed in bright colours or in multicoloured prints. Their hair is always tied up in a muslin kerchief, knotted at the corners. Sometimes, for a veil, they wear a pretty face-towel bought at the market. The women, when they go out, cover their heads and, if they meet a man, the lower part of their faces with a long black veil, glossy or dull, which reaches to the feet and gives them a very graceful outline. In the Qena district this shawl (*milaya*) is dark brown.

The women's dresses, now that imported stuffs have invaded the market, are often brightly coloured. They fit close at neck and wrists, but are not waisted, and usually end in a flounce, which sweeps the ground. Their underclothes

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

39. *T*.—This is not quite true. Fellaheen are frequently to be seen in the Nile and in the canals, swimming and splashing about for pleasure after a hot day's work. [113] [515] [526]

40. *T*.—In 1943 the cheaper cotton stuffs were selling at a controlled price of P.T. 6 a metre, and a tailor would ask at least 15 piastres for the work. [463] [435]

41. *T*.—At Akhmîm and Nagada in Upper Egypt a considerable weaving-industry still flourishes. The latter has a considerable trade with the Sudan. [288]

42. Dr. Theodore Bilharz (d. 1862) was a German lecturer at the Cairo School of Medicine. In 1858 he solved the mystery of this endemic disease by discovering the parasite that causes it, and thus made attack upon it possible. [744]

43. Department of Public Health : REPORTS AND NOTES ON ANKYLOSTOMIASIS AND BILHARZIASIS IN EGYPT: Government Press, Cairo, 1924,

This work contains a complete bibliography on the two diseases, with an account of their ravages in various villages of Egypt, and of the Government's attempts to fight them.

44. Ibnet ish-Shaty' : EL-RIF EL MASRI (THE EGYPTIAN COUNTRYSIDE), p. 125.

45. In 1935 Egypt imported 7,888 tons of coffee beans from Java, Santos and Yemen. [439]

46. See the ANNUAL REPORT for 1938 of the Central Bureau of Information on Narcotics. However, in a technical essay in the REVUE DES QUESTIONS SOCIALES (July 1940, pp. 94-106) entitled IS BLACK TEA HARMFUL TO THE HEALTH AND WORK OF THE PEASANTRY ? the author (who remains anonymous) feels justified in giving a negative answer. [272]

47. The famous Egyptian cigarettes are all made of imported tobacco. The intention was to avoid the danger of hasheesh as well as to gratify the Turkish Government. (The smoking of very cheap cigarettes has now become extremely common among the fellaheen. - *T*, 1945.) [276]

48. BAMIA and MOLOKHIA are two mucilaginous plants. The former, known in British colonies as OKRA, is 241 262

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464 LABOR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT--availability and scarcity of labor force; skilled and unskilled labor; incidence and types of unemployment (e.g., voluntary, intermittent, seasonal, cyclical, residual, technological); employment opportunities; labor mobility and turnover; employment agencies; regulation (e.g., age and sex restrictions); etc. See also:

Internal migration 166
Immigration 167
Business cycles 458
Unemployment insurance 748
Unemployment relief 746

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

It is not claimed that these figures are anything but approximate, but they at least bring out the proportionate amount of work and show clearly the labour that can be undertaken by children in this agrarian community. They reveal that a 13-year-old boy can contribute to almost two-thirds of the actual labour in the cultivation of the land (his solo contribution for the winter crop being 440 hours out of 720; and 536 hours out of 888 hours for the summer crop).

One can assess from the approximate figures the paramount importance of children as a non-salaried essential in the labour-force, especially in a community where hired labour is extremely difficult to get. Moreover, it is not difficult to appreciate the maxim that an early son is of great service. It is a part of filial piety for a son to be expected to perform all that is within his capacity to relieve his father.[1] Thus from the economic point of view, a child's process of growing up connotes his father's gradual relinquishing of all the farm tasks he has been carrying out hitherto. One of the ideals of family life is for the children to do the things their parents have been doing before, as he who resembles his father has committed no injustice. This criterion is one of the elements involved in describing a boy or a girl as 'muaddab' or 'muaddabah'—disciplined. If the father has grown-up children to rely upon for work, this would certainly enhance his social prestige, being able through more leisure to participate fully in the social events, mediations and informal gatherings as he can afford the time for them.

Children are thus considered to be leisure-giving to their parents; since a leisurely father is one who is not hard-pressed by work and usually designated as 'sheikh arab'. Yet sons sometimes resent the excessive indulgence of their fathers in this privilege, when they feel that they themselves are overworked, or when incited by their in-laws or 'pals' that they are working like a donkey while father is acting like 'a great arab sheikh, enjoying the shade and the councils'. In some cases, this might lead to son and father friction, which might result in the former quitting the village.

A few people in the village have land, but no sons. In connection with this, Ali remarked that this is one of the ways in which God tested his creatures, by not letting them have both land and sons. Such people have to get permanent hired labour for the cultivation of their land; and these are euphemistically dubbed 'participants'. The owner provides the animals, implements, and seeds for work, while the participants provide the labour, receiving in return a quarter of the crop. Sometimes a part of the land is let to a person, the owner having nothing to do with it, but receiving one-third, or sometimes one-half, of the total crop besides paying the tax.

The economic contribution of boys applies equally to girls in connection with the household work. Girls are expected to co-operate with mothers in domestic tasks, and, as they grow older, to be increasingly able to relieve their mothers so that the latter can widen their social activities and

[1] See in this connection children's statements in the *Moral Ideology Test*, Appendix IX.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

back'. He added that the prophetic tradition runs that if people are contented, God will look after them as He looks after the birds that leave their nests on feeling hungry and return to them well satisfied. Another prophetic tradition maintains that there are two types of people whose hunger is never satisfied, the searcher for knowledge and the searcher for wealth, and while the first is praised the second is condemned. This does not mean that the Koran or the prophetic tradition encourages apathy, as one can quote other statements conducive to hard work. But the mere fact that the statements, related by Ali and uttered by a great number of the literate villagers, are those exalting contentment, asceticism and submission to fate, to the exclusion of any others, shows a kind of selectivity in values entertained by the villagers. The writer was struck, however, by the amount of frugality and economic calculations of the villagers, in spite of their being frequently dubbed as fatalists. Their fatalism is usually a justification for the misfortune that befalls them, as epitomized by their saying, 'What is written on the forehead, must be seen by the eye'. On the other hand, they have another maxim saying that 'If one's back itches, there's nothing like one's finger to scratch it and give comfort'. Contentment thus actually means satisfaction with what one can get without the undue strain of striving to get ahead or the strenuous efforts for satisfying numerous material demands. It would be very difficult, with the fellah's simple tools and the sweat involved in his work, to convince him that his lot could be improved by more work. 'Both attitudes—contentment and acquisitiveness—have their own social context. Contentment is adopted in a close economy; acquisitiveness in an expanding economy. Without economic opportunities the striving for material gain is a disturbance to existing order, since it means the plunder of wealth from others. Whatever form this plunder may take, it is a curse to the common man. Therefore, to accept and be satisfied with the social role and material rewards given by the society is essential. But when economic opportunity develops through the development of technology, and when wealth can be acquired through exploitation of nature instead of through the exploitation of man, the doctrine of contentment becomes reactionary because it restricts individual initiative.'[1]

The attitude of contentment manifests itself also in those villagers who work in towns, for immediately they feel that they have enough money to last them for some time, they return to the village to live amongst their people till they run short of money, whereupon they return to the town.

Contentment as a value, however, does not, of course, prevent the villagers from looking at things and acts in economic terms. Even the welter of their formal and informal social contacts has an economic significance. Help given to friends and relatives is a debt which is expected to be returned, in spite of the magnanimous phrases associated with its rendering, such as 'There is no calculation between us' or 'It makes no difference between friends'.

[1] H. Fei and C. Chang, *Earthbound China*, London, 1949, p. 84.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

and evidencing practically no difference in architecture, style or number of storeys, as there are no two-storey houses in the village. Members of each sex dress more or less alike, and the observing of this convention is a very important factor in social equality. Their maxim in this connection is 'Eat what you yourself like, but dress according to what others like'. Yet all this does not mean that they are entirely identical, and the differences are usually in quantity and not in kind. The headman of the village—'Omda'—may have more clothes than others, but his clothes are the same type of clothes tailored in the same style; he may have a larger house than his neighbour but both are built in the same style with the same kind of furniture, the same sanitary arrangements and cooking facilities. The villagers do not divide themselves into 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Strengthening this sense of equalitarianism are the kinship ties where all the members of the village are inextricably connected with each other by family ties and obligations, this being reinforced by the sense of brotherhood amongst Moslems as enjoined upon them by the Koran.

With respect to the position of children in the village, they are certainly considered as an economic asset from the age of five. They constitute the labour-force in a community where hired labour is very difficult to procure. With not many expenses needed for their upbringing, and with the tangible labour they undertake, the burden of rearing children is offset; for although they are consumers, they are, even more so, contributors to the family resources. Children are also a means of providing parents with leisure and prestige, and every new child provides his or her older sibling with more opportunities for respite and leisure. Their economic contributions are enlisted by a gradual process of training, first through actual help in the farm activities, this being followed by the assignment of specific tasks to them, according to their age and physical abilities.

It must also be emphasized that these conditions and attitudes obtain in a village of small landholders. It is a matter for enquiry to find whether the same conditions prevail in villages where large-size ownership of the 'landed gentry' is the basis of economic life. It must be remembered that distribution of land in Egypt shows a great deal of unevenness. Out of 5,857,258 feddans of cultivable land in 1942, 2,160,219 feddans were owned by 12,103 persons out of the total number of owners amounting to 2,550,579. Of these owners 93 per cent held less than 5 feddans each and were in possession of only 31 per cent of the land. In 1939, owners of plots over 20 feddans constituted but 1·5 per cent of the total number of landowners, and these possessed just over 50 per cent of the total land.[1]

This system of land ownership in Egypt has nothing to do with legal Islamic institutions, apart from the Islamic law of inheritance. Such maldistribution of land is mainly due to the Ottoman regime and the reign of Muhammad Ali. The Land Code of 1858 and Land Registration Law of

[1] See *Pocket Census of Egypt*, 1948. Wendell Cleland, 'A Population Plan for Egypt', in *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, 1939.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

asked him where he had been, to which he replied, "I have been among the *'afārīt*."

Since that day he has been perfectly sane, and is now living happily in his native village.

The following is another case related to me in 1923, the incident occurring, so I was told, in 1920. In a town in Upper Egypt there dwells a somewhat celebrated Coptic magician, whom we will call the Sheikh B. He is known to be married to an *'afrīteh*, because he disappears every night, but neither his wife nor her children—for the people have discovered that she has offspring by the sheikh—are ever seen. They may come up above ground sometimes while people are talking about them, but they remain invisible.

The upper story of a certain house in this town was occupied by a Coptic clerk employed in a large business firm, while in the lower story lived a man whose wife had no children. The husband of this woman, distressed at having no offspring, begged the Sheikh B to come and see his wife, hoping that he might be able to give her some charm or read some incantation which would cure her barrenness. Accordingly, one evening, at a late hour, the magician arrived.

The occupant of the upper story was in the habit of praying every night and morning. On the evening on which the Sheikh B arrived this man was reciting some of the Psalms of David in a loud voice. On hearing these recitations the Sheikh B cried out, "Oh, make this man stop reading, for he is interrupting me!" Some of the people who had assembled to see the sheikh went up to beg the man to stop reciting. However, he paid no attention to their request, and read through all the Psalms, repeating them in a loud voice, so that they could easily be heard in the rooms beneath him.

The Sheikh B then cried out to him, "Oh, stop reciting these Psalms, you have burnt one of my sons"; for the sheikh had brought up many *'afārīt* from under the earth, including his own sons, so that he might consult them as to what should be done for the childless woman.

Finally the clerk went to bed; but as soon as he had laid himself down he felt that there were people in the room, and suddenly found himself being lifted off the bed. He opened his eyes, and saw four small *'afārīt*, dressed in quaint coats and trousers of many

'AFĀRĪT

boy fell to the ground, where a stone struck one of his eyes and destroyed the sight. The boy then knew that the donkey was really an *'afrīt* which had assumed animal form, and presently he heard it saying, "Don't come here again. If you do I will injure you!"

Up to the present time the boy, who is now a grown man, has never dared to return to this church for fear of the *'afrīt*. He told my informant this story himself, and swears to the truth of it.

The *'afārīt*, as I have already explained, sometimes leave their subterranean home and come above ground. It is therefore considered dangerous to stamp on the ground, to strike it with a stick, or to throw anything violently on it. Such acts should be especially avoided at night, when the *'afārīt* are believed to come up in large numbers. If a man, therefore, has to walk some distance at night he is glad if he can get a fisherman to accompany him, for he believes that then no *'afrīt* will come near him. The *'afārīt* are afraid of fishermen and of their nets, and when they see these men throwing their nets they run away in terror. One woman told me that the *'afārīt* fear that they may get caught in the nets.

A few days after I had left a certain village in Upper Egypt a boy who was employed by the *'omdeh* (headman of the village) was in the building containing the machinery installed by the *'omdeh* for pumping up water for irrigating his fields. It was at night, and for some reason or other the boy happened to stamp on the ground with his feet. Soon after he lay down to sleep, but was aroused by an *'afrīt* who tried to pluck out his eyes. The boy cried out, "Oh, leave me, and forgive me!" But the *'afrīt* refused, saying that when he had stamped on the ground he had injured the head of one of his children. The boy cried out, and then, being a Copt, crossed himself, whereupon the *'afrīt* disappeared.

That *'afārīt* are capable of kindly actions is shown in the following belief. A boy who is still uncircumcised may be mysteriously carried away when sleeping beside his mother at night. He will be brought back to his sleeping-place on the same night, and on the following morning his mother will find that he has been circumcised, the operation having been much better done than if it had been performed by the village barber; moreover, the wound will be found to have already healed. In such a case it is believed that the boy has a good *ḳarīn* who has brought good *'afārīt* to perform this painful operation painlessly.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
COPTS MR10

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic saints receive the appellation Māri (Saint), and many of the beliefs and ceremonies associated with them are similar to those connected with the Muslim sheikhs.

A Coptic saint is usually buried within the precincts of a monastery or church, which may be dedicated to him. A popular saint may be honoured by the dedication of numerous monasteries and churches to his memory, in all of which he is equally venerated.

Sometimes the same saint may be claimed by Muslims and Copts alike, in which case the grave is often situated in an open space, possibly under the shadow of a tree or trees, the lower branches of which are covered with votive offerings contributed by the followers of both religions. With the Christians as well as with the Muslims candles are a favourite form of votive offering, and when the saint is claimed by the adherents of both faiths their candles may be seen burning side by side.

Many years ago, on a spot in the cultivation in Upper Egypt where a church dedicated to Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi now stands, there was a square plot of *ḥalfa*-grass. This site was claimed by the Muslims as the burial-place of a sheikh. There was a very poor man who lived in the town adjoining these fields and who acted as *farrāsh*[1] at the sugar factory in the same town. One night while he was sleeping he felt some one give him a kick. This naturally aroused him, and he saw standing beside him a man whose face and form were of great beauty, and who was clothed in white garments. This man told the poor *farrāsh* that he was Māri Mīna el-ʿAgayebi, that he wished him to build a church, and that he would himself indicate the spot on which he wished it to be erected. The saint told the *farrāsh* that he had called him to do this work instead of a rich man, as the latter would boast that by his riches he had built the church, whereas the saint himself would supply the poor man with all that he needed for the erection of the sacred building.

Māri Mīna then led the *farrāsh* to the patch of *ḥalfa*-grass in the fields, and told him to measure two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the east and two metres from the edge of the *ḥalfa*-grass toward the west. Then he was to dig the whole plot thus measured out to a depth of two and a half metres. When

[1] Literally, sweeper—the title given to servants employed by the Government to keep the Rest-houses clean, also to men employed in other public buildings in the same capacity.

2. Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

corn *'arūseh*, of which mention has been made above. Or both this custom and that of bringing food to the threshing-floor and, after distributing it among friends, placing what is left in the heaps of *dura* to satisfy the *'afārīt* (pp. 176 f.) may be a survival of the presentation of offerings to the harvest-goddess Ernūtet. Such offerings to Ernūtet are often depicted in tomb-chapels of the New Kingdom. Thus Zeserkere'senb is shown making food-offerings

FIG. 184. MAKING OFFERING TO ERNŪTET
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 143.

to that goddess "on the day in which the barley is measured, Pharmuthi 27th" (Fig. 184).[1]

In the tomb-chapels of Kha'emḥēt[2] and Nakht (Fig. 181) victuals of various sorts are represented as lying close to the threshing-floor, evidently an offering to the harvest-goddess, but at the same time reminding us at once of the custom still observed in connexion with the threshing of the *dura* (pp. 175 f.).

The paying of the harvesters and ferryman in kind (pp. 173 f., 180) finds many a parallel in ancient Egyptian records.[3] It is to

[1] See also J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i, pp. 348, 385; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
[2] W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte*, Pls. 189, 194.
[3] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 591; T. E. Peet, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. vii, p. 82.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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Ancient Egypt MR5

F A 464 465

be noted in this connexion that the determinatives of the ancient Egyptian word *hmt*, the 'fee' paid to a ferryman, are those regularly affixed to words signifying foodstuffs—*i.e.*, an oval roll of bread above the three plural strokes, or a conical loaf and a jar of beer above a circular loaf.[1]

F A 241 412

The wooden fork used nowadays on the threshing-floor and for winnowing (p. 173 and Fig. 105) is exactly like the ancient one (Fig. 185). Also much the same sort of iron sickle as the modern one (p. 173, Fig. 101) was already in use in the Roman period

A [532] [231]

FIG. 185. ANCIENT HARVESTING-FORKS
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 234.

(Fig. 186). At an earlier date the sickle consisted of a wooden body, in shape closely resembling the lower jawbone of an ox, in which flint teeth were inserted (Fig. 173).[2]

F A 755 789

It is only necessary to read that part of chapter xiv in A. Erman and H. Ranke's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*[3] which deals with medical knowledge to see how nearly ancient and modern prescriptions and magico-medical cures are alike. Appended comments such as "Tried and true" (p. 207) find close parallels in the famous *Papyrus Ebers*.[4] In ancient as in modern times the 'physician' wrote out spells commanding a disease to depart,[5] and both adults and children were cured of sickness, or protected against both it and ghostly malice, by means of written charms

[1] See A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 515 f.
[2] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara* (London, 1890), p. 29; *Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob* (London, 1891), pp. 53 ff.
[3] Pp. 409 ff.; see also A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 357 ff.
[4] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 359. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

A [113]

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river. 133

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricultural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages. 133 137

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all. 133 241

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'îd, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt. [166 464]

2. — Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural. 162 241

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls.

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (11). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (12).

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country.

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (13).

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above

and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawâr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

This uneven distribution, though it may be explained by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

There is still another factor of prime importance to be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*barâri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

E F 651

It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

E F 659 311 464

Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

E F 423 794 429

Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (11). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

248 this control cotton remains the staple crop of Modern Egypt,
656 It is planted in every *mudiriya* from Beheira to Aswan.

First of all, to avoid intermixture of varieties, which would lower the quality and ruin the reputation of its long-staple cottons, the Ministry of Agriculture takes over the control of all seed from the time of ginning. The fellah buys his seed well in advance from agents of the Royal Agricultural Society, the *Crédit Agricole* or ginning firms. When the
248 field has been prepared by two or three cross-ploughings and divided into furrows, he brings the seed for planting. Then he pushes a few seeds at a time, from six to ten according to the variety, into small holes set about eight inches apart on the southern edge of the furrow and made with a sort of dibble, which also serves as a measuring stick. A fortnight later he visits his seedlings, and near any holes which show no signs of growth he plants more seeds, which he waters by hand. After six weeks the young plants are grown and are even too close. The fellah proceeds to thin out the clusters, leaving in each hole two plants only, and rooting out all the rest. Meanwhile he irrigates the fields, every 15 to 25 days in May and June, and every 12 to 15 days in July. After seeing that every furrow gets its complement of water he uproots the weeds and strips the top bud from each plant, so as to improve the growth of the cotton by preventing the stem from growing too tall. In this way thousands of square miles are not so much farmed as gardened.

248 Like gardening, cotton cultivation demands abundant
461 labour at command. It therefore presupposes, or produces,
464 a dense population, unless machinery makes up the shortage, as in the United States. It is all the easier to obtain the large number of workers required, as the work itself is easy. Women and children here are as good as men, and increase the family's earnings. This fact has contributed largely to the success of cotton in Egypt.

After a brief flowering, which begins in July, the pod bursts open, then the fruit develops and is ready for picking. Twice between the end of August and early October, the whole of the village, divided into gangs under the harrying orders of overseers (*rayess*), sets to work picking the cotton. There
[533] is a recognised chanter of work-songs, to the rhythm of whose music the white tufts of the cotton plant must be deftly stripped off. None must be missed, yet not a single

leaf may be picked with them. When the pouch formed by raising the lap of the *gallabiya* is filled, the worker goes to empty it in a clearing in the middle of the field, and then resumes his place in the line. From the clearing an endless file of fellaheen carries the cotton to the storeyard (*shoona*) belonging to the owner or the bank. Thence, some time later, it will go on donkey or camel back to the ginning and pressing factory, where from September to April, in an atmosphere of stifling dust, thousands of fellaheen, especially children, load and unload the ginning machines which separate and sort the seeds [25]. After a third picking nothing is left on the fields but brushwood. This is pulled up by hand, or cut down level with the soil, then bound into bundles and stacked on the rooftops to be used as fuel.

B. The Poor Man's Bread

After cotton, maize is the most important crop, covering about a million and a half feddans. Its introduction and general adoption are comparatively recent, though it became popular in Egypt before cotton, and was already well established in the Mameluke period.

In 1810 Sylvestre de Sacy wrote: "*Dura*, a large species of millet, is one of the commonest crops in Upper as well as Lower Egypt, and the people live in great part on bread made from *dura*."

Dura is the Arabic name for maize. The Ministry of Agriculture calls it *dura shamiya* or Syrian maize, to distinguish it from *dura eweiga* or *rafi'a*, the ancient millet.

Throughout Africa, wherever there is sufficient water and a rich soil, the different varieties of millet are giving place to maize, a cereal of American origin which is easy to cultivate, quick-bearing and favourable to a subsidiary crop. This is especially the case in Egypt. In fact the *dura rafi'a* is now planted only on about 300,000 feddans in Upper Egypt, where the basin irrigation system still holds, and is growing rarer with the advance of perennial irrigation. Maize has conquered the Nile Valley, because it has proved so suitable to the fellah and to the soil that it is reputed the world's best. Only that of Mozambique can compare with it.

The fellah sows it broadcast in July, gives it plenty of manure, and waters it seven times. Thirteen to fifteen

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger;

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

432 in the village, while the *Crédit Agricole* takes it at only 150 kg.
434 as in the cities, and advances 130 piastres (1937 prices) on each *ardeb*.

Your cunning merchant proceeds to deposit the wheat, which he pretends to have harvested, in the *shoonas* of the bank. He thus gains 10 piastres and 25 kilogrammes of wheat on each *ardeb* bought, and without assuming any risks himself can confidently expect an additional premium at the time of sale by the *Crédit Agricole*.

461 There are no walls but only low ridges or channels
464 dividing the fields of Egypt. In the same way there is no sharp division between the various kinds of labour which we have just been analysing. None of these categories is self-sufficient, and each overlaps the next. There are few fellaheen who do not pass from one to another, or belong at the same time to two of them. The very conditions of the fellah's life imply a certain similarity in them all.

181 (1) *Poverty*. Because he knows nothing of either fore-
511 sight or economy, and even more because he is weak, isolated and ignorant, the strong and the rich reap the fruits of his labours. The bank or the moneylender, the Government, the *omda*, or the landowner, gathers in most, if not all, of what he has sweated to produce. He himself, to use one of his own sayings, remains "poor as a needle, which clothes others but itself remains unclad".

427 (2) *Dependence*. The fellah can plant neither what he
466 wishes nor when he wishes. As a day-labourer he works
656 in a gang at a definite task under the strictest supervision. As tenant farmer or share-cropper he plants his crops according to the owner's plan. As landowner he is dependent with regard to dates and choice of crops on the orders of the Ministry of Agriculture. He has no sort of liberty or initiative one way or the other.

511 (3) *The minimum standard*. However bad his affairs may be, *the fellah is at least certain of his daily bread*. No-one actually starves to death in the country; for even under the worst conditions of labour the natural resources of the land remain.

574 (4) *Family Labour*. The help given to the fellah by his family must never be lost sight of. Among the Egyptian peasantry, wife, children, *gamoossa* and donkey make up

am an Egyptian". Though far more truly an Egyptian than most political figures, he is unconscious of belonging to a nation. This explains why, in the nationalist movement which swept over Egypt after the end of the first Great War until she obtained independence, the world of the fellaheen took no part. Nation, liberty, politics, these are words and notions beyond their understanding. 181 619

During the first Great War the English recruited a native contingent, the Labour Corps, to defend Egypt from the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. These "volunteers" had to be enlisted by force, with even more difficulty than for other forced labour. The same lack of patriotism explains the distaste of the fellaheen for military service. The 24,000 soldiers of the Egyptian Army are almost all recruited from among them. In practice the law of 1902 does not apply in all its rigour except to them. Government officials and their sons; only sons, eldest sons whose fathers are dead, helpless, or over sixty; students; ministers of religion; and invalids are all exempt. 702 464 619

A man liable to service is at the mercy of the lot between the ages of 19 and 27. When the lot falls on him he is enlisted for five years. To ensure his rejection he may put out one of his eyes, or cut off a couple of fingers. He will get into debt to buy himself off from military service, or register as a student. If he can, he will hide or escape. As many as 35% of the recruits shirk their service. 702 [164]

When there is no way out, and he cannot avoid leaving home to join the army, the family receives condolences and abandons itself to mourning as if for a bereavement. To leave the village is like going abroad. *Partir, c'est mourir.* "Enlistment in the army is the passport to town life. Everything in the countryside grieves and protests — ox, plough, *saqia*, *gamoossa* and all" (Guindi). [152]

The conscript will be sadly missed on the land. It is not surprising that the fellaheen prefer to pay twenty or even a hundred pounds to avoid service, even if they are to be burdened with debt for a very long time. 702 426

This is not to say that they make bad soldiers. The fellaheen are men that know how to handle a gun, and the victorious armies of Mohamed Aly and Ibrahim Pasha were composed of them. That is ancient history, but it 702

871 His methods are by no means arduous. Two or three
794 hours a day, six months a year, and in three years the fellah children, helped by the stick, will know a good many *suras* by heart. For his pains the *fiqih* or teacher receives two loaves of bread, or one piastre, a week for each pupil.

872 Nowadays even the girls must go to school, but their
562 turn comes in the afternoon. In the morning they help their mothers and fetch in the water, trying their best to
[482] balance on their heads the little *ballas* which is given them.
857 When they grow up they will be able to carry seven gallons of water in this way. They are also made to gather dung, bird-droppings, and any other refuse which may be useful in the house or the field. They make fuel cakes (*gilla*) by
[372] taking a little mud, some chopped straw and a quantity of dung, which they knead into a paste with their hands and feet, and then take lumps of, to flatten into cakes about eight inches across. These are spread out on the ground to dry in the sun, or stuck on the wall. When thoroughly dry they are piled up on the roof. These dung-cakes are the fellah's coal; they are an essentially agricultural form of fuel, used wherever wood and money are lacking, for example in China and in several parts of France.

524 The girls have rag dolls to play with, but more often,
857 up to the age of about twelve, they join with the boys in both work and play. Occasionally, from the age of eight
● [464] until they get married, they go into service in middle-class homes.

857 These children are ignorant and to all appearance neg-
593 lected. They live in a herd and seem to have no patronymics. But it would be wrong to infer from this that they are of no concern to their parents, and belong to the community at large. On the contrary their parents love them passionately, far more than they, love each other. Children are never put
[736] up for sale here as they are in China, and there is no need for orphanages. Parental sensitiveness is a frequent cause of quarrels among both men and women. If a teacher hits or
861 ill-treats their child they are up in arms immediately to
871 remove him from school and take a brutal vengeance. This does not, however, stop them from using blows and insults to 'educate' their children themselves.

593 The children are also very much attached to both their parents. This attachment seems to be rooted in their

21. The GAFFAR is a period of artificial dryness, occurring as a rule in January and lasting forty days, during which the Government allows no water to remain in the canals, so as to allow them to be cleaned by special gangs at State expense. At the same season, since the crops have little need of water, opportunity is taken to fill the reservoirs, such as those of Aswan and Gebel Awliya. 113 [312 805]

The true low-water period, however, comes in April—June, when the Nile is naturally very low and the daily flow is at its minimum.

22. Hartman ; L'AGRICULTURE DANS L'ANCIENNE EGYPTE, p. 119.

23. G. Legrain ; LOUQSOR SOUS LES PHARAONS : Légendes et chansons populaires de la Haute-Egypte ; Vromant, Brussels, 1914, p. 171.

24. (*T*) See also : M.G. Maspero ; CHANSONS POPULAIRES RECUEILLIES DANS LA HAUTE-EGYPTE. N. G. Mavris ; CONTRIBUTION À L'ETUDE DE LA CHANSON POPULAIRE ÉGYPTIENNE.

24. M. Tissot ; ETUDE SUR LE CALENDRIER COPTE ET SES EPHÉMÉRIDES, Mourès, Alexandrie, 1867.

DEVISES QUI ACCOMPAGNENT LES NOMS DES MOIS COPTES DANS LE LANGAGE POPULAIRE ARABE EN EGYPTE, by Y. Artin Pasha, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE 1891, pp. 250-267.

25. According to a study by Ibnet ish-Saty' ('Aisha 'Abdur-Rahman) published in AL-AHRAM for the 17th, 18th, and 19th February 1937 there were 25,000 children between 8 and 15 years of age employed in that year in this unhealthy labour. Their day began at 5 a.m. and lasted without any definite interval until 9 p.m. There are in Egypt about a hundred such factories preparing cotton for export, in which the fellaheen work under deplorable conditions. "During his recent tour in Gharbiya H.M. King Farouk visited the TEFTEESH (estate) of Sakka, belonging to the State Domains.... In the room where the cotton bales were being pressed His Majesty observed that the pressing with hands and feet was extraordinarily fatiguing to the fellaheen, 113 464 857

113
[464 857] and even prejudicial to their health". LA PATRIE (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. AL-MUSSAWAR, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

[651] 27. "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

[249 136] 28. GELECHIA GOSSYPIELLA SAUNDERS. The boll-worm properly so called is EARIAS INSULANA, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is PRODENIA LITURA F.

[465] 29. Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

[249] 31. One feddan produces from 4 to 5 CANTARS of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 CANTARS.

32. AL-AHRAM, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

[426 735] 33. The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : RECHERCHES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES EN EGYPTE : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : RECHERCHES SUR L'ORIGINE DES EGYPTIENS : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: FIXITÉ DE LA RACE DANS LA FEMME EGYPTIENNE : BULLETIN OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : LE HENNÉ CHEZ LES MUSULMANS DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD : JOURNAL DES AFRICANISTES, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

[302] 38. There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

131.

A Friendly Reception.

539x 166 464

At a time when profits were low, a Nile sailor left his ship and went, perhaps to Suez, in search of other work. He then knocked about in the Delta, and after a long absence, returned home, at last, to his wife and children, who, in the meantime had suffered need. The wife receives him with this cutting reproof, the sense of which is: Did I not tell you what the result would be? But what do you care about your family! (ll. 3—8).

[593]

We often heard from our workmen, that, in order to secure work, they wander, for instance, from Quft in Upper Egypt, to Suez. This song was usually attached to No. 88 with which it has nothing to do. The connection is probably suggested only because of the picture of the ship used in No. 88.

593 539x 464

Ya ma ʾultē-lak, ya ma ʾultē-lak
winte lissa fi-ʾangetak?:
Ya yehūdi, yabn-el-yehudīye,
hissak terūḥ eš-šarʾīye,
yaḥdūk bilād el-ġarbīye,
tiṣbaḥ ʿadīm. id-dirrīye.
Dannak ʿala-l-muʾdāf rāiḥ
teṭalla ʿer-ramḍ es-saḥ.

Did I not tell thee so, did I not tell thee so?
When thou wast yet on thy ship?
"Thou Jew and son of the Jewess,
Beware of going to the Sharʾīye,

[186]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

x 539 593 464

5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

[50] 2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

[103] 4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely: the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzīq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

[114] 8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmūd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danāīds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

x 539 832 [824]

A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamazni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.